

IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION ON COMMANDS THROUGH TPR COMBINE WITH REPETITION DRILL

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to improve students comprehending on commands given. The method of this research is collaborative classroom action research.. The instruments used to collect the data are field note and individual test checklist form. The research finding of 1st cycle has shown that lack of understanding of the students in comprehending the commands is the main reason of this problem. However, the situation changes in 2nd cycle when the teacher keep repeating the commands and showing actions used as the technique to clarify the meaning of the commands which is called Total Physical Response combine with repetition drill. TPR combine with repetition drill improve students to comprehend the commands so that they will be easier to carry out the command given. In addition, the students will be more motivated to learn more due to the TPR is an attractive technique for students.

Keywords : *Total Physical Response, Repetition drill, Commands, Classroom Action Research.*

Teaching English as a foreign language requires a hard effort especially in terms of teaching kindergarten students. Based on the writer's experience, lack of understanding in the target language especially the commands, cause the children cannot respond the conversation well and inhibit the learning process. Command is commonly used in teaching. Command is used to give instruction to someone, to do or not to do something. The best activity in the world is a waste of time if the students do not understand what they are supposed to do. If the children do not comprehend the commands given by the teachers, they could not respond exactly right as the teachers' wishes. It is happened in K1 Tomato of TownforKids Preschool in the beginning of the new academic year where the students come from different

background of languages (Tio ciu, Hakka or Malay).

Based on the background above and to facilitate the conduct of research, it is important for the writer to formulate the problem as follows: How can TPR improve students' comprehension on the commands to the Kindergarten One (K1) students of TownforKids Preschool Pontianak in Academic Year 2015/2016?

A teacher should be a person who helps students from nobody to become somebody, from knowing nothing to know something. The teachers also must develop teaching strategies which not only transmit information, but also encourage children to learn independently and as a member of group. Students should come to know more; to know deeply; to have enhanced skills, abilities or attitudes. Not everyone can

become a good teacher due to teaching is not simply deliver the material in the class and ended up in a worksheet paper. A conventional teaching system earlier times (which only sat down properly, listened to the teacher and copied the note from the whiteboard), is not too appropriate to apply in this globalization era.

Furthermore, Chauhan (2009:120) states some definitions of teaching as follows: (1) Teaching is communication between two or more persons who influence each by their ideas and learns something in process of interaction. (2) Teaching is to fill in the mind of the learner by information and knowledge of facts for future use. According to the writer, the nature of teaching is a process of encouraging students to make connections between their real world experiences and the subject being studied. Especially if the students are kindergartners which in fact moves a lot and have a great curiosity mostly about everything.

To help the learners in learning foreign language Mary Slaterry and Jane Willis (2001:4) suggest some ways to teach them: (a) Make learning English enjoyable and fun, (b) Don't worry about mistake, be encouraging; make sure children feel comfortable and not afraid to take part, (c) Use a lot of gestures, action, pictures to demonstrate what you mean, (d) Talk a lot to them use English, especially about things they can see, (e) Play game, sing a song, and say rhymes and chants together, (f) Tell simple stories in English, using pictures and acting with different voices, (g) Don't worry when they use their mother tongue. You can answer a mother tongue question in English and sometimes recast in English what they say in their mother tongue, (h) Consistently recycle new language but don't be afraid to add new things or to use words they won't to

know, (i) Plan lesson with varied activities, some quiet, some noisy, some sitting, some standing and moving

Meanwhile, Kember (1997) cited in Norton (2009:6) stated that conceptions of teaching are commonly found to fall into two main categories: teaching as information transmission and teaching as supporting students. It is important for a teacher to provide students with hands-on activities in order to make this connection. In line with Brown which is stated in his book (2007:8), teaching is a process of showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand the material given. Therefore, as a facilitator, a teacher needs to help students to explore more and deeper about the lesson.

After seeing and getting to know the character of each of students, teachers are expected to provide the appropriate stimulation when teaching (especially in teaching the target language). There are important links between what and how children are taught and what they learn. The broader and richer the language experience that is provided for children, the more they likely to learn as it stated in Cameron (2001; 20). If we want children to develop certain language skills, we lessons that will build those skills. Children (in this term refers to kindergartners) have an amazing ability to learn language through play and other activities which they feel interesting. At this point, the most commonly used skill in learning is listening. Environments that implement English as the basic language in school help children to learn the language quickly through listening.

To measure how far the ability of the children in comprehending the command, teachers have to do the assessment. There

are some principles in assessing young learners as Cameron (2001: 218) defined as follow: (1) Assessment should be seen from a learning-centred perspective; (2) Assessment should support learning and teaching; (3) Assessment is more than testing; (4) Assessment should be congruent with learning; (5) Children (students) and parents should understand assessment issues.

Command is included into one of the speech acts as according to Cohen (1996: 383) that there are five categories of speech acts based on the functions (Representative, Directives, Expressives, Comissives and Declaratives) and it is included into Directives category. The meaning of the command itself as stated by Aarts (2001: 60) is "A sentence that is normally interpreted as directive, i.e. someone is telling someone else to (not) do something." Moreover, according to John (1998: 1), "Command is a sentence used in issuing orders or directives." The command is usually used by teachers to ask children to perform a particular task. Various types of commands have been studied throughout the compliance literature as stated by Bertsch et al (2009:136).

For the young learners who never learn any foreign language before of course will face difficulty in comprehending the words or commands given by the teachers. Therefore, teacher should find a technique or media which can help the students to understand what is being said. TPR combine with repetition drill are one of the appropriate technique which can be used in delivering the meaning of the language by involving the body movements. Originally developed by Dr. James J Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose University (California) in August 1968, Total Physical Response (TPR) is based on the theory that the

memory is enhanced through association with physical movement. He believes that learning second language (in Indonesia, English is learnt as a foreign language), should be based on model of first language learning. He also believes that young learners respond physically first before starting to produce verbal responses and his theory has been applied for almost thirty years all around the world.

Furthermore, about TPR, Asher (1997: 35) emphasized on developing comprehension skill before the learner is taught to speak. On the basis of this idea, TPR is linked to comprehension approach that believes: (1) Comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language; (2) The teaching of speaking should delay until comprehension skill is established.; (3) Skill acquired through listening transfer to other skills; (4) Teaching should emphasize meaning; (5) Teaching should minimize learner stress and TPR provides a stress-free environment for kindergartners to learn the target language. While Repetition drill technique that is still used by many teachers when introducing new language items to their students. Drilling is a method of language teaching. Thornbury (71: 2006) stated, "A drill is repetitive oral practice of a language item, whether a sound, a word, a phrase or a sentence structure." The teacher says the word or performs the meaning of the word and the students follow. In this thesis, drilling refers to repetitive in action that used in TPR.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

In improving and developing teaching, research in the classroom is needed to know what actually happens in the class, what the learners think, and the response of the teacher or how she reacts in the

class. Action research is deliberate, solution-oriented investigation that is group or personally owned and conducted. According to

Elliott (1993:7) defined Action Research is a process whereby, through the collection and interpretation of data, in the light of personal reflection and self-evaluation, individuals can establish situational understanding as the basis for action which integrates practical aims with moral understanding. It takes a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring our own teaching context in order to bring changes and even better improvement in practice. The action plan of classroom action research has four stages which are planning, implementation of action, observing and reflecting.

Planning

The researcher together with the collaborator planned a teaching learning activity to solve the problem found in the previous learning process. This phase including to arrange the lesson plan, preparing teaching aids if it is needed, individual checklist form, field notes and appropriate technique to solve the students' problem in teaching and learning process.

In this acting step, the researcher did the research based on the lesson plan prepared with a certain technique and performed the commands using 2 cycles.

This observing step was needed to analyze the data in order to make it sense so it could be presented

Reflecting

At this point, researcher and collaborator reflect on what have been done in the classroom and evaluate the students' performance test to define weaknesses or problems then discuss them to find any solution as the action on the next teaching learning activities/

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

The research designed which consisted of 2 cycles, each of which consisted of 1 meeting. The cycle 2 was needed to be done because the cycle 1 had not reached the criteria of success. The second cycle was done by doing an improvement of activity. A's English achievement indicated that there was an improvement from cycle 1 to cycle 2. It was found that the kindergarten students were good in performing the commands. From the results of this research, students' comprehending ability was categorized as good. By having this result, the used of TPR had changed the children's learning behavior toward English language learning. The observation was based on the students' performance in conducting or applying the technique in the class.

Findings of the First Cycle

Planning, in this stage, the researcher and the collaborator made a planning to overcome the issue in the class where the students just kept silent, looked confused and only be followers of their friends when the teacher gave the commands. The researcher had prepared the observation checklist form which was used by the observer to observe the expected occasions. The observation checklist form was aimed to observe teacher's action and performance whether she did her jobs as the motivator, the facilitator or the model of the technique, and the guide for the teaching learning process well or not. Observation checklist form also was aimed to observe the students' activeness involving in the teaching learning process, their attention to the teaching learning process. The researcher also prepared field notes to observe the students' and teacher's activities during teaching learning process to know whether there

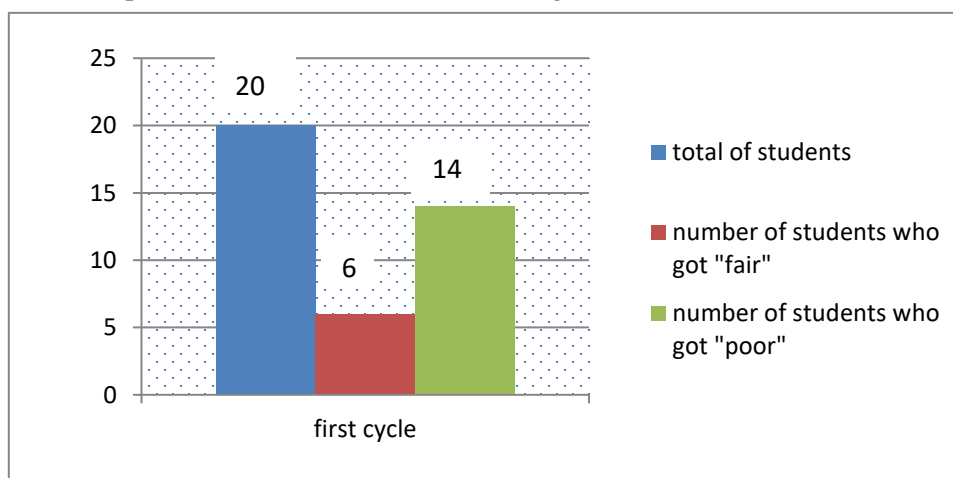
was any unexpected occasion happened. There was also individual checklist form which was aimed to observe students' who could perform the command and who could not.

Acting in the first cycle which was done on July 22nd 2012. Teacher greeted the students, checked the students' attendance list, asked to drink, line up, washed hands, and did some action which needed to be followed.

Observing, this was the stage where the researcher observed the activities in the class made by the teacher or students (namely about class situation, students' response and teacher's performance in presenting the materials) by giving comments in the table prepared in field notes and observation form. Beside field discussed about the conclusion of implementing the action. The first cycle has shown that from twenty students, only 6 students who could do the commands which mean only 30% from 100% of success. It happened because it was the first time the students listened to the commands in English. They did not comprehend the commands which made them unable to perform it well. From the

notes, the observer also used individual performance checklist form to observed and give a tick for the commands which they could do correctly in the table prepared. The results of the observation in cycle one showed that only 6 students who could respond some instructions and got "fair" score while the 14 students got "poor", which mean that the learners' performance during the process of teaching and learning still not satisfied because more than 50% students did not comprehend the commands. The target of the first cycle was not high. The researcher did not hope much on the first cycle because that was the first occasion that the class conducted the commands.

Reflecting, in this stage, the researcher and the collaborator discussion between the researcher and the collaborator, it could be concluded that there was a need to do the second cycle which needed more efforts and consistency to keep repeating the commands in English using TPR technique to improve the number of students who got "fair" into "good" or "excellent" and the students who got "good" into "excellent."



Grafik 1. First Cycle

Tabel 1
The Frequency of Performing the Commands

First Cycle	K1 Tomato
	Research
Sum of students who get "Fair"	6
Sum of students who get "Poor"	14
"Fair" percentage	30%
"poor" percentage	70%
Sum of the students	20

Findings of the Second Cycle

Planning, in second cycle, the researcher had planned the same procedures which there were not significant differences with the previous cycle. However, at this stage, the researcher focused on the modified action through TPR combine with repetition drill in learning process to improve the students comprehending, such as giving the commands in various tone (slow to rapid) and repeating the commands, modify the commands with songs or by dividing the students in groups. The teacher also still prepared field notes and individual checklist form to collect the data in the class.

Acting, in the second cycle of this stage, a TPR class was done on July 29th 2012. In the morning, when the student had just came, the teacher greeted the students, asked to drink, line up, washed hands, and did some action which needed to be followed. Briefly, from the class was began until went home, the teacher applied the TPR technique in every command in action.

Observing stage in this second cycle had shown a different. The second cycle contains two meetings. In the first meeting, the teacher performed all the commands by doing actions which helped the students to fully comprehend the

meaning of the commands. In the second meeting, the students seemed more relax compared to the previous meeting. When the teacher instructed the commands, most students surely performed the action. The students enjoyed themselves when the teacher repeated the commands in various tone and less of them did mistake in performing the commands given. Some students, who at first did not want to move, finally responded to the command and moved around with his/her friends.

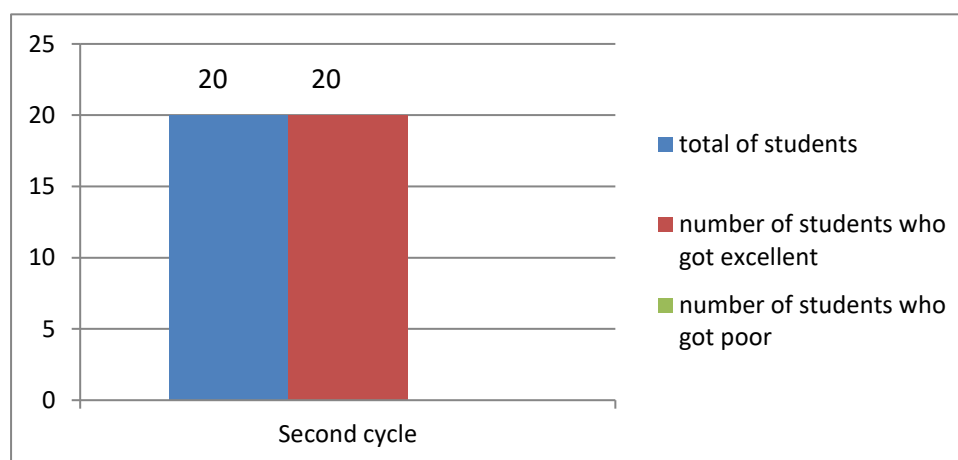
While the group performed the commands in front of the class, the collaborator observed by giving a tick on the individual checklist form for every performance did by each of the students. The teacher (helped by the collaborator) also wrote some results in the field notes.

At this second cycle, based on the individual performance checklist form, the result was categorized into excellent. It is shown that twenty students could do 8 – 9 commands which categorized into excellent. The progress could be identified from the numbers of commands done that increased in second cycle.

For the final reflection, in this second cycle the researcher and the collaborator felt satisfied for the Total Physical Response technique was successful to improve children in comprehending the

commands. Due to the teacher kept repeating the commands in English and there was variation of implementing the commands in the class helped to increase the numbers of students who could not respond the commands physically through

TPR, from 6 students became 20 students, from 30% to 100% of success. It indicated that the students' comprehending the commands was excellent by using Total Physical Response.



Grafik 2. Second Cycle

Tabel 2.
The Frequency of Performing the Commands

Second Cycle	K1 Tomato
	Research
Sum of students who get "Fair"	0
Sum of students who get "Poor"	0
Sum of students who get "excellent"	20
"Fair" percentage	0
"poor" percentage	0
"excellent" percentage	100%
Sum of the students	20

Discussion

From the researcher finding above, the researcher would like to state some important points to be discussed: The Total Physical Response combine with repetition drill as the teaching technique were suitable to be implemented in English class especially in Kindergarten class. These techniques helped to release

the stress for students during the teaching and learning process. The data had shown that after giving the treatment by using the TPR combine with repetition drill, numbers of students who were able to perform the commands were increased and indicated that the students' performances in second cycle was better than the first cycle.. The students showed

their progress slowly but sure in every cycle. The modifying actions done in the class also gave different situation in every cycle. It motivated the students to get involved in the activities.

The writer also found some factors that caused or affected the results which were the students did not fully understand in English, the attention span of kindergarten students were very short so that it was a little difficult to attract their attention to be focused during the teaching and learning process and some students were too shy to do the actions (did not move at all).

Here were the strengths and weaknesses that the researcher found in teaching commands through TPR technique to the kindergarten students. The strength were TPR helps to clarify the meaning of commands the teacher used because it involved the movement of the body which was easily understood by students, improve students' ability in listening quickly with TPR activities, provided a stress-free environment and it was good for kinesthetic learners who were required to be active in the class.

While the weaknesses were it effective in the beginning level of language proficiency and it was not flexibly used to teach everything (if it is used too many time will like repetitive)

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

As the result of data analysis, improving students' comprehending the commands through TPR influenced and increased the students' comprehension. TPR helped to clarify the commands given from the actions. There was a progress in students' result, from first cycle to second cycle after treatments. It increased from

fair to excellent. The students had made a good progress step by step due to the commands given repeatedly. At the first cycle, only few students were involved in the activity. But then all students were involved in the second cycle.

Based on the result of observations and assessments which had done shown that the students comprehend the commands given and there were improvement from fair to excellent/ They began to involve in performing the commands independently when TPR was applied as the technique in teaching. It means that the action hypothesis is proved.

Suggestion

The discussion and the other data that support this research may suggest something to improve the teaching learning process and increase students' comprehending of the commands. The suggestions are as follow: (1) TPR method can be used as a technique in teaching English as a foreign language. It helps students to understand the meaning by seeing the movements/actions modeled by the teacher, so it will be more clearly. (2) Not all materials can be taught through TPR, therefore the teachers must consider to choose the certain topics that can be shown by movement, such as commands about parts of our body, commands about colours, or commands about shape.

Total Physical Response combine with repetition drill are effective classroom techniques that works for students. The foreign language learners are able to pick up the target language quickly and able to retain what they learnt. The researcher believes that these are good techniques that all teachers can be used all around the world

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